

Claims:

1. A compound comprising a peptidic vector and at least one fluorescein dye, wherein the peptidic vector
5 comprises the amino acid sequence X_3 -G-D, wherein the peptidic vector and the fluorescein dyes are coupled, and wherein
 X_3 represents arginine, N-methylarginine or an arginine mimetic,
10 G represents glycine,
D represents aspartic acid,
or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.
2. A compound as claimed in claim 1 given by formula I,
- $$\begin{array}{c} R_a-C(=O)-X_1-X_2-X_3-G-D-X_4-X_5-X_6-X_7 \\ (I) \end{array}$$
- 15 comprising two cyclising bridges,
wherein X_3 , G and D are defined as in claim 1, and wherein
- R_a represents $-(CH_2)_n-$ or $-(CH_2)_n-C_6H_4-$ forming a bridge to
20 either X_2 , X_4 or X_6 , wherein
n represents a positive integer from 1 to 10, and
- X_1 represents a bond or 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 amino acid residues, wherein one amino acid residue is optionally
25 functionalised with a spacer moiety, or said amino acid residue possesses a functional side-chain such as an acid or amine group,
- X_2 and X_4 represent independently amino acid residues
30 capable of forming a cyclising bridge,
- X_5 represents a hydrophobic amino acid or derivatives thereof, and

X_6 represents an amino acid residue capable of forming a cyclising bridge, and

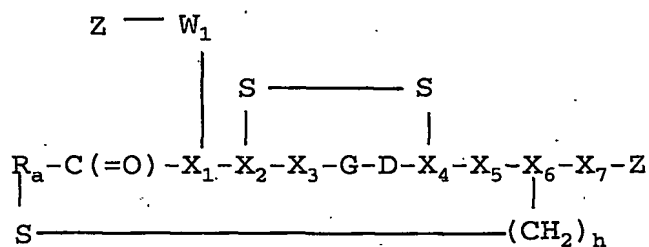
5 X_7 represents a spacer or biomodifier moiety or is absent,

and,

the compound further comprising at least one group Z,
10 representing a fluorescein dye, linked to one or more of the groups X_1 , X_6 or X_7 optionally via a spacer group.

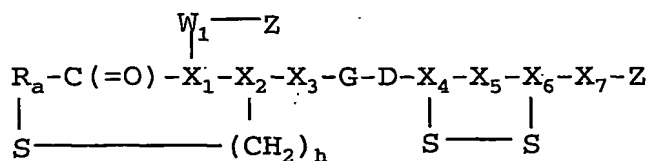
3. A compound as claimed in claim 2 selected from one of the formulas;

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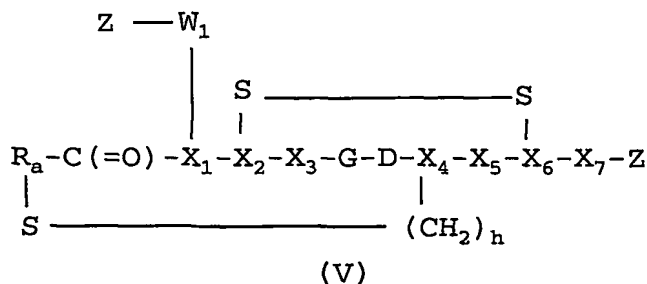
(III)

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(IV)

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wherein R_a , X_1 , X_3 , G , D , X_5 , and X_7 are as defined in
 5 claims 1 and 2 and wherein

X_2 , X_4 and X_6 represent amino acid residues capable of
 forming a disulphide or a thioether bond,

10 W_1 is a spacer moiety or is absent,

h is a positive integer 1 or 2,

and wherein at least one of the Z groups is present
 15 representing a fluorescein dye.

4. A compound of formula III as claimed in claim 3
 wherein R_a represents $-(\text{CH}_2)-$.

20 5. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of
 claims 3 or 4 wherein X_1 represents an amino acid residue
 with a functional side-chain such as an acid or amine
 group, the amino acid being selected from aspartic acid,
 lysine, glutamic acid, homolysine or a diaminoalicyclic
 25 acid or derivatives thereof.

6. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of
 claims 3 to 5 wherein X_2 , X_4 and X_6 independently
 represent a cysteine or homocysteine residue.

7. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 6 wherein X₃ represents arginine.
8. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 7 wherein X₅ represents phenylalanine, tyrosine, a 3-iodo-tyrosine or naphthylalanine.
9. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 8 wherein X₇ comprises 1-10 units of a monodisperse PEG building block or is absent.
10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of a compound of any of the previous claims, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvants, excipients or diluents.
11. Compounds of any of claims 1 to 9 for use as an optical imaging contrast agent.
12. Use of a compound as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9 in the manufacture of an optical imaging contrast agent for use in a method of diagnosis involving administering said contrast agent to a human or animal body and generating an image of at least part of said body.
13. A method of generating images of a human or animal body by optical imaging involving administering a contrast agent to said body, and generating an image of at least a part of said body to which said contrast agent has distributed, characterized in that said contrast agent comprises a compound as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9.